

CHAPTER 7:

GENERAL INFORMATION

COATESVILLE VA MEDICAL CENTER: ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

There may come a time when you are unable to decide or tell us what you want with regards to your treatment. You have the opportunity now to make some decisions ahead of time. You can tell is in writing about the kind of care you would want if you cannot speak for yourself. This is done through an **advance directive**. Some common questions about advance directive are:

- What is an advance directive?
- Who can be my proxy?
- What happens if I do not have an advance directive?
- How do I go about making an advance directive?
- What other help is available?
- Can my advance directive be changed?
- What should I do with my advance directive?

What is an advance directive? An advance directive is a written document that explains the health care you want to receive if you cannot or choose not to make your own decisions. There are two kinds of advance directives

- A **living will** lets you state in advance what kind of care you would want or not want if there comes a time when you cannot make these decisions for yourself.
- A **durable power of attorney** for health care is used to appoint a person you trust to make health care decisions for you when you cannot or choose not to make your own decisions. This person is called a **proxy** or **health care agent**.

Who can be my proxy? It should be someone you trust – a spouse, parent, adult child, friend, or other family member. Whoever it is, you should talk to them about your concerns and wishes and what kind of treatments you would want or not want. You and your proxy cannot know all of the questions that might arise in the future, so you'll want your proxy to know what you value most in life and how this reflects on the type of care you would choose for yourself.

What happens if I do not have an advance directive? If you can no longer make decisions about your health care, your doctor will ask your next of kin, family, and friends what they believe you would want. These decisions are not easy to make. They can cause great stress in families that have not taken the time to discuss these matters ahead of time.

How do I go about making an advance directive? At the Coatesville VAMC, our social workers are equipped to assist you in preparing advance directives. Just ask any of your providers to contact your team social worker.

What other help is available? Our medical center has resources to help you write your advance directive. These include video programs on the VA Television Network or in the Patient Education Center. You can also ask for our medical center's advance directive policy and procedures.

Can my advance directive be changed? Yes, but only by you. You may change or cancel it at any time. You can do this by simply telling your doctor, but it is best to write a new advance directive. Be sure to tell our proxy and others concerned with your health care.

What should I do with my advance directive? An advance directive is only effective if it is shared with those who need to know. It must be part of your medical record. Make and give copies to the following parties

- your doctor(s)
- your proxy
- anyone concerned with your health care

*****Don't forget to make a copy for your own records.***

*SOURCE: <http://www.coatesville.va.gov/patients/advance.asp>

DRIVING DIRECTIONS TO THE COATESVILLE VA MEDICAL CENTER

1400 Black Horse Hill Road, Coatesville, PA 19320

Phone: (610) 384-7711

From Philadelphia

- Rte 76 to King of Prussia
- See below

King of Prussia

- Rte 202 (South) to Rte 30 (West)
- Rte 30 (West) to VA Medical Center & Brandywine Hospital Exit, at end of Exit turn left to light
- At light, turn left, follow signs to VA Medical Center

Philadelphia International Airport

- Rte 1-95 (South) to Rte 322 (West), toward West Chester
- Rte 322 (West) to Rte 1, turn left, proceed short distance to Rte 202 (North), turn right
- Rte 202 (North) to Rte 30 (West) in Exton (NOTE: Rte 202 makes abrupt right turn before reaching West Chester)
- Rte 30 (West) to VA Medical Center & Brandywine Hospital Exit, at end of exit turn left to light
- At light, turn left, follow signs to VA Medical Center

Delaware

- Rte 202 (North) to Rte 100 (North) to Rte 30 (West) in Exton
- Rte 30 (West) to VA Medical Center & Brandywine Hospital Exit, at end of exit turn left to light
- At light, turn left, follow signs to VA Medical Center

OR

- Rte 41 (North) to Rte 10 (North) to Rte 30 (East)
- Rte 30 (East) (NOTE: immediately following Rte 10, merge right toward Downingtown)
- Rte 30 (East) to VA Medical Center Exit
- Turn Left at end of Exit
- Proceed straight ahead to VA Medical Center

North

- PA Turnpike to Exit 23/Downingtown West Chester
- Rte 100 (South) to Rte 113 (South)
- Rte 113 (South) to Rte 30 (West) (at bottom of long decline)
- Rte 30 (West) to VA Medical Center & Brandywine Hospital Exit, at end of exit turn left to light
- At light, turn left, follow signs to VA Medical Center

INFORMATION AND REFERRAL AGENCIES

Philadelphia	õFirst Call for Helpö 215-568-3750
Montgomery County	õFirst Call for Helpö 215-568-3750
Bucks County	õUnited Wayö 215-949-1660
Delaware County	õFirst Call for Helpö 215-568-3750
Chester County	Chester County Cares 610-436-4040
Lancaster County	Lancaster Linc 717-291-5462
State of Delaware	Delaware Help Line 1-800-273-9500
Camden County	õUOSSö 856-663-2888 or 1-800-331-7272
Burlington County	Contact 609-267-8500